

The Sabbath School.

Sabbath School Lessons for November.

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT: *Death of Abraham.* Gen. xxv. 1-18.

Looking back through four thousand eventful years we can still perceive more remarkable manifestations of God's grace in Abraham's life and character than in any other person that ever trod our earth, except the God-man himself. He attained to a height of moral excellence singular in the annals of our race. As the loftiest mountain summit claims the brightest and purest light of the morning sun and reflects it farthest into deep and distant valleys, so Abraham, towering immeasurably above the chiefs of his time, still stands forth a monument of God's electing love, resplendent with the light of God's face, and became the Heir of the Covenant of Promise, the Father of the faithful, the Friend of God.

His life was free, simple, manly, full of hospitality and kindness towards men, and of the deepest piety towards God and faith in him. He refused to live in cities—for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Josephus asserts that Abraham taught the Chaldeans the truth that there is but one living and true God, and that he introduced the study of astronomy into Egypt. The Arabs, and other Asiatic nations, have numerous traditions about him, and claim to be descended from him.

Sarah's death and Isaac's marriage left Abraham comparatively desolate, and this, no doubt, led him in his old age to marry Keturah. Keturah held a lower rank than Sarah, and her children were all sent away lest they should dispute the inheritance of Isaac. Abraham had been compelled to send Ishmael away; and he does voluntarily in the case of the children of Keturah what he was compelled to do with the son of Hagar. All his children were well provided for.

Vy 5, 6.—He gave the inheritance to Isaac, but to the other sons he gave "portions."

V. 8.—He lived 38 years after the death of Sarah, and his full age was 175 years. Esau and Jacob were fifteen years old when Abraham died. "*Gave up the Ghost,*" means simply *expired*.

V. 9.—Isaac and Ishmael were probably on brotherly terms. Abraham was buried in the cave in the field called "Machpelah" which he had purchased. In all the land

of promise he possessed only a burying-place. The Mosque of Hebron now covers the spot where Abraham was buried. The last notices of the cave are in the forty ninth and fiftieth chapters of this book: "There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac, and Rebekah his wife;" there Jacob buried Leah; there, too, Jacob himself was buried "in the cave of the field of Machpelah which Abraham bought for a possession of a burial-place from Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre." There are massive walls here, built probably by Solomon or David. Within this wall no European entered (except, perhaps, twice in disguise,) since the year 1187 till 1862, when the Prince of Wales and his suite were admitted. The tombs do not mark the actual place of burial, but are memorials in honour of the dead who lie not far away. Dean Stanley thus describes the visit of the Prince of Wales, (Stanley himself being present): "The shrine of Abraham, after a momentary hesitation, was thrown open. The guardians groaned aloud. The chief turned to us with the remark 'The princes of any other nation should have passed over my dead body sooner than enter. But to the eldest son of the Queen of England we are willing to accord even this privilege.' He stepped in before us and offered an ejaculatory prayer to the dead patriarch, 'Oh! Friend of God, forgive this intrusion.' We then entered. The chamber is cased in marble. The so-called tomb consists of a coffin-like structure, about six feet high, of stone or marble.—The real tomb is under the mosque which was once a Christian church.

LESSONS.

1. From Abraham's example we should learn to make proper arrangements with respect to our property, lest there should be quarreling over it after our death.

2. In order to die the death of the righteous we must live a righteous life.

3. The only earthly possession that even Abraham could secure, was a tomb. None of us are sure of any more, and the poorest will get no less.

DOCTRINE TO BE PROVED.

Death is gain to the Christian. PEE 21-23; Rev. xiv. 13., &c.

SECOND SABBATH

SUBJECT: *The Labourers in the Vineyard* Matt. xx. 1-16.

At the end of the preceding chapter the Lord says, that "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first;" and the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard is intended to illustrate this principle and so with equity. Chap. xix., from the 27th verse